

# McCabe campaign: State party gives McCabe campaign the Bernie treatment

Posted on Wednesday, Nov 1, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

**Contact:** Christine Welcher, Campaign Manager  
[608-279-2733](tel:608-279-2733)  
[christine@bluejeansgov.com](mailto:christine@bluejeansgov.com)

Madison Wisconsin – The Democratic Party of Wisconsin first ignored and later refused requests from governor candidate Mike McCabe’s campaign for access to the party’s member list and statewide voter list, acting in a manner reminiscent of how the Democratic National Committee worked behind the scenes to favor the party’s eventual 2016 presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and disadvantage fellow candidate Bernie Sanders.

To facilitate contact between voters and the party’s candidates, McCabe believes the state party should provide all candidates running in the primary with the lists at no charge, which the DPW refuses to do. McCabe’s campaign sought to purchase the lists and was turned down. He is the only candidate entered to run in the Democratic primary to be denied access to the lists.

Having worked for decades as an independent government watchdog and reform advocate, McCabe has not belonged to any political party. But he has registered to run for governor as a Democrat.

DPW officials have repeatedly said the party wants a fair and open primary and would not play favorites in the race, McCabe’s campaign manager Christine Welcher said.

“Privately, party leaders clearly are playing favorites. By denying help to one that is given to the others, they are putting their thumb on the scale, which is exactly what

they promised not to do. DPW is making the same mistake the DNC made in 2016. They apparently haven't learned a thing from what just happened last year," Welcher said, adding that the state party has granted access to its voter list, known as the Voter Activation Network (VAN), to nonprofit advocacy groups not affiliated with the party while denying access to McCabe's campaign.

"We will find other ways to reach voters. Getting the party lists wouldn't make our campaign, and being denied the lists won't break our campaign," Welcher said. For decades McCabe worked for two of Wisconsin's most highly respected and fiercely independent government watchdogs - the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign and the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance. In the mid-1980s he ran a statewide civic education program for the nonprofit Taxpayers Alliance, known for watching over tax collections and bird-dogging how the public's money is spent. In 1995 he helped start the nonpartisan Democracy Campaign, which specializes in shining light on political donations to officials from both parties. He led the group for 15 years before leaving at the end of 2014 to start Blue Jean Nation, a grassroots citizens group working to organize people locally to challenge the political establishment to change its ways.